Resilience: A Strength-Based Approach to Good Mental Health

Resilience is an innate capacity to rebound from adversity and change through a process of positive adaptation. In youth, resilience is a fluid, dynamic process that is influenced over time by life events, temperament, insight, skill sets, and the primary ability of care givers and the social environment to nurture and provide them a sense of safety, competency and secure attachments.

Core Concepts:
Sense of Competency:
- Determination & persistence
- Takes pride in activities
- Develops/evaluates alternative solutions
- Task completion

Caring & Respect of Self & Others:
- Engages in make-believe play
- Takes pride in new things
- Initiates behavior of others
- Tries to do things for him/herself
- Tries out new words / builds vocabulary

Sense of Purpose & Meaning:
- Caring & Respect of Self & Others
- Sense of humor
- Playful; Creativity; Exploration
- Ability to compromise
- Task completion
- Develops/evaluates alternative solutions
- Takes pride in activities

Cultural heritage and traditions

Resiliency: What We Have Learned

What can Families & Communities do to Promote Resilience?

- Gather and unite around priority issues
- Value diversity & leadership
- Cooperate in achieving goals
- Have high, but realistic expectations for youth

Related Topics & Models

Resiliency Theory Primer – Norman Gramzay
Attachment Theory – John Bowlby
Erickson’s Developmental Stages
Neuroplasticity – James Loewy
Social and Emotional Competency – Daniel Goleman
Positive Psychology – Martin Seligman
Positive Youth Development
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
Post Traumatic Growth (PTG) – Richard Tedeschi
Strength Based Practice / Systems of Care (SOC)
Transforming Trauma Project
Primary Mental Health Project – Enmy Cowen
Public Health Interventions in Children’s Mental Health - Georgetown ULC, Center for Child and Human Development
Salutogen Model of Health – Sense of Coherence (Nutting, 2006)
Able to provide comfort in times of distress

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